White liberal suffers abuse from 'both sides'; still struggles on

By PAT WILLIAMS STEWART

Symbolic of sincere civil rights advocates who must suffer needless frustrations, unwarranted abuses and unjustifiable misery is Rev James Jones, a white minister who recently returned to Indianapolis from Brazil, South America, where he has been doing missionary work for two years.

The victim of both white and Negro taunts and ill-treatments, especially while serving as director of the Mayor's Human Relations Commission, Rev. Jones' doctor ordered him to change his way of life due to failing health.

From 1962 to 1964 Rev. Jones taught and fed meat regularly to 200 underprivileged children at an Escola, DeFavela, school of 41 slums.

So cruel have so-called prominent Negro and white citizens been that one Negro Baptist clergyman rumored that Rev. Jones was in a "lunatic asylum for the past five years."

He is presently pastor of the Interracial Peoples Temple Disciples of Christ Church from which droves of white members left due to Rev. Jones' uncompromising principles. The congregation is now meeting in the Broadway Christian Center, 17th and Broadway.

Throughout his life, Rev. Jones has undergone tormentors opposing his righteous convictions. When he accepted the position as Commission head in 1960 for three solid months segregationists tossed rocks at his home, called the phone demanding: "Nigger lover get out of town," threw explosives in his yard, and some racists went so far as to write anti-Negro sentiments to prominent civil rights workers and attributed them to Rev. Jones by signing his name.

Branded a "radical" and rabble-rouser,' Rev. Jones still vigorously strived for equal rights, although opposed by conservative whites on one hand and reluctant Negroes on the other.

Constantly living in annoyance, although not fear, he has been threatened already even though he hasn't been home two months.

Rev. Jones believes firmly that the field of civil rights is no place for "compromising souls." Many feel that while he was director he moved "too fast" for the conservatives, and the "liberals" let him know they were afraid of the pace.

With little "thanks," all the drawbacks and little if any moral support, Rev. Jones was still able to accomplish much as Commission director.

One of his major victories was the integration of wards at Methodist Hospital while a patient. Rev. Jones was accidentally assigned to a "Negro ward" because his family doctor, E. P. Thomas, is a Negro. The leader refused to be moved to a "white ward" and after some conferment desegregation was agreed upon.

Ironically enough, the "Champion for Negro Rights" received but one phone call other than church members during his lengthy stay at Methodist.

Everyone in the civil rights field knows that Rev. Jones is 100 percent real in his beliefs and convictions. Persons doubting him should realize that due to the integration of the Peoples Nursing Home the management has struggled to maintain it. Potential white patients, when learning that Negroes are admitted boycott the premises, while Negroes refuse to patronize it for some unknown reason. It is said to be the "finest in the city."

Rev. Jones feels that the Negro has tremendous talent and success but should share his resources in a cooperative manner with other Negroes as is common among the Jews. "The Negro should also stand firmly in the corner of those backing his cause," Rev. Jones asserts.

Rev. Jones' fight for rights dates back to his boyhood days in Lynn, Ind., a city which led to his characterization of his father as a Ku Klux Klan type. Negroes weren't allowed in town after sundown.

The pastor, who did not see a Negro until he was 13 years old, somehow realized through some supernatural power, that his father's anti-Negro, anti-Semetic views were not right.

After completing his education at Indiana University, Rev. Jones moved to Indianapolis where he pastored a southside Somerset church and operated an integrated community center. Due to his liberal beliefs, Rev. Jones was constantly heckled during services by bigots who killed cats and tossed them in the church yard or dropped them in outdoor toilets then sent someone inside the church to inform Rev. Jones of the misdeed and directing him to come out and see.

Rev. Jones was finally forced to organize the Community Unity Church where he carried out his unbiased objectives.

An idealist, Rev. Jones is one who can't compromise with his conscience and advises others who feel the same way not to get involved in the civil rights movement.

Through all of his suffering he would do it over again. He commends strongly his devoted wife whom he says has been separated from most of her family due to their liberal activities. He describes his integrated Peoples Temple Church as including "the best of white people and the strongest of Negroes" — really topnotch people.

The Jones friends are few—they don't really belong in the white or Negro community. They find themselves rejected from both societies because they're so-called "too controversial."

But The Joneses do not pity themselves for the agony suffered, even if it seems those benefitting do not appreciate it, because they have a happy family of four children, James, Jr., their three-year-old son; a Japanese American child, 11; a Korean-American boy, 7, and a natural born child, 4. Another American Indian daughter, is married and well-situated. Their other Korean-American daughter was killed in a car accident. Besides this, the Jones have "a few friends who mean so much."

Rev. Jones admits that as pro-integrationist the family will never be popular, but they are grateful for getting along royally with neighbors and have no plans to move from their home presently. In the future Rev. Jones wishes larger quarters for the children. He predicts that had his "international family" been in a white neighborhood some harm might have come or his home might have been painted up or damaged by vandals.

Rev. Jones is still active in the civil rights picture but he works in a different role, not by choice but by certain circumstances and the nature of his convictions. He is now working with the Broadway Christian Center.

"Being cut off from superficial relationships is one of the greatest ovations. I am interested in anyone who is right and decent without regard to ethnic background.

One of the most memorable unfortunate incidents occuring to The Jones family happened to his loyal and understanding wife. Mrs. Jones was awaiting a bus to take their Negro son to the clinic when a middle-aged white woman spit in Mrs. Jones' face. When she began to weep, the woman returned to spit in the baby's face.

Another time Rev. Jones suffered a slight concussion when he was struck in the head with a milk bottle as he attempted to open his door. He believes a teenage young white boy," scared as a jack rabbit," was his assailant while his father awaited in the car.

Rev. and Mrs. Jones were most frightened when someone warned that something would happen to The Jones children if they were not taken from the playground. The stern admonishment was: "Lay off civil rights.

THE JONESES: Although suffering abuses for the racial stands taken by the sincere Rev. James W. Jones, pastor of Peoples Temple Disciples of Christ Church now meeting in the Broadway Christian Center, the international, interracial family has still managed to maintain a happy home life. Rev. Jones, former director of the Mayor's Human Relations Commission, is pictured with his humane family (from left to right) Lew Eric, 11; Jimmy (James W. Jones Jr.) 3, Rev. Jones, Agnes, 21, and married; Mrs. Marceline Jones, Richmond, Ind., native, a devoted and understanding wife; Stephan Gandhi, 7, and Suzanne, 4. (Recorder photo by Houston Dickie)

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